

THE SHAPIRA MANUSCRIPT

The Translation Based on J. M. Allegro

In 1883, an antiquities dealer in Jerusalem named M. W. Shapira arrived in England with several strips of parchment. Shapira claimed that these fragments were found in the Dead Sea area and were part of an early version of the book of Deuteronomy. Experts who examined the strips called them forgeries, saying that the manuscript could not have survived in the Dead Sea climate. Disgraced and dishonored, Shapira left England and soon after committed suicide. Ironically, scholars in recent years have come to believe that Shapira's manuscript was not a hoax and may actually have been a portion of the oldest Bible in the world.

First Words

These are the words that Moshe spoke according to the mouth of the LORD to all the children of Israel in the wilderness beyond Yarden in the plain. The Lord God spoke to us in Horeb, saying, You have lived long enough in this mount. You turn around and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorim, and to all the places close by, in the plain, in the hills, in the valley, and by the sea shore.

Moshe Regarding Those Who Were Destroyed & Others Who Succeeded Them

When we left Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness that you saw; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said to you, You have come this day to the mountain of the Amorim. Go up and possess the land, as the God of your fathers told you. But you would not go up. And you murmured and said, Because God hated ... to destroy us. And God was angry and swore saying, As I live, surely all the people who have seen my signs and my wonders that I did these ten times, ... not ... they have not listened to my voice; they will not see the good land that I swore to give to their fathers, except your children Moshe, and Kaleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun who stand before you. They will go in there, and to them will I give it. But as for you, turn-around and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Sea of Reeds, until all the kin of the men of rebellion are wasted from among the troops.

And they stayed in Kadesh-barnea until the men of rebellion were wasted out by death from among the host. . . You are to pass through this day the coast of the children of Esau who dwell in Seir. You will not distress them, nor interfere with them in battle, for I will not give you of their land any possession, because I have given it to the children of Esau for a possession. The Horim have lived there from ancient times, but the children of Esau succeeded them, and lived in their stead.

And we turned and passed by the wilderness of Moab. And God said to me, You will pass over this day the coast of Moab; you will not distress them, nor interfere with them in battle: for I will

not give you of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar to the children of Lot for a possession. The Rephaim lived there since ancient times and the Moabites called them Emim, but God destroyed all of them, and the Moabim lived there in their stead.

And we turned and went over the brook Zered. And God spoke to me, saying, You get up, and pass over the river Arnon. This day I will begin to deliver to your face Sihon the Amori, governor of Heshbon, and his land. And we went forth against Sihon to Jahaz, and we smote him until we left him none to remain. And we took all his cities from Aroer by the brink of the river of Arnon, to Gil'ad and to the river Jabbok so the Lord God delivered all to us.

And God spoke to me, saying, This day, you are to pass the coast of the land of the children of Ammon. You will not distress them nor interfere with them in war, because I have given to the children of Lot the land of the children of Ammon for a possession. The Rephaim have lived there since ancient times; and the Ammonim called them Azamzumim, and God destroyed them before them, and they lived in their stead.

And God said to me, Send men to spy out Ya'azer. And we took Ya'azer and lived in the cities of the Amorim. And Og the governor of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we smote him until none was left to him remaining, and we took from them sixty cities, all the region of Argov, cities fenced with high walls, gates and bars, beside unwalled towns a great many. And all the cities of the plain, and all Gil'ad, and all Bashan, to Salkah and Edre'i... the land of the Rephaim. For Og governor of Bashan remained of the remnant of Rephaim.

Moshe on Apostasy and Reformation

And we turned and journeyed southward and abode over against Beit-peor. And at that time the daughters of Moab and the wives of the Midianim came out against you, and they called you to eat of their sacrifices, and you did eat of their sacrifices and drink of their drink offerings, and you bowed down to their gods, and committed whoredom with the wives of the Midianim. And you joined yourselves to Baal-peor that day: and the anger of Elohim was kindled against you, and he smote you at that time with a great plague. And I sent from among you men to war against the Midianim, and you smote them with the edge of the sword, and you took from the captives very many, and the plague was stayed.

And God commanded me at that time to teach statutes and judgments, that you might do them in the land in which you go over to possess. Take heed to yourselves; you will not add to my statutes neither will you diminish anything from them. Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget, and make you a graven image and similitude, the likeness of any figure that is in your sky above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth, and his anger be kindled against you and he destroy you speedily from this good land.

Moshe on the Shema & the Stone Tablets

So know this day, and keep his statutes and his commands, that it may go well with you and that you may prolong your days upon the earth whom the Lord God gives to you. Hear, O Israel; the Lord God is one God. And you will love the Lord God with all your heart, and with all your soul exceedingly. And these words that I command you this day will be in your heart: and you will

teach them diligently to your children, and you will talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you get up. And you will bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they will be as bands between your eyes. And you will write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates.

For God made a covenant with them in Horeb in the day of the assembly. And I stood between God and you ... at that time, for you were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up ... to show you the word of God, saying, Hear, O Israel: you are to pass over Yarden this day, to go in to possess many nations and mighty, great cities with fenced walls. Speak not in your hearts, These nations are many; we cannot dispossess them. You will not be afraid of them. Remember what God did to Pharaoh, and to all Egypt; so will God do to all your enemies, for God is he who goes over before you; as a consuming fire he will destroy them, and he will bring them down before your face quickly. Moreover God will send the hornet among them, until they who are left, and hide themselves from you, be destroyed. Only if you keep his commands, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command you this day.

So understand this day, that the Lord God gives not before you this land to possess it, for you have been a stiff-necked people from the day that you did depart out of Egypt until this day. You have been rebellious against the Lord God. In Horeb on the day when I had gone up into the mount to receive the two tablets of stone, and on them were written all the words that God spoke with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

You provoked your God to wrath, and you made you a molten calf. And I fell down before God in the mount that burned with fire: and the two tablets were in my hands. And I beheld your sins, and I broke the two tablets before your eyes, and I prayed for you at the same time forty days and forty nights. And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kivroth-hattah'avah, you rebelled against your God.

At that time God said to me, Cut out two tablets of stone like to the first, and come up to me into the mount. And I went up into the mount, having the two tablets in my hand. And God wrote on the tablets the Ten Words that he spoke to you in the mount in the day of the assembly. And he gave them to me, and look, they are in the ark that I had made.

Moshe Relates a Promise to a Populous & Mighty People

And at Kadesh-barnea when God said to me, Go up and possess the land; you rebelled against your God and you went not up nor listened. And God said he would destroy you. So I prayed for you when I stayed in the mount forty days and forty nights. And God listened at that time also, and he did not destroy you in a moment. Not for your righteousness has your God given you power to get wealth. Only God had a delight in your fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even above all peoples or the Lord God is God of all gods, and Governor of governors, a mighty God, and a terrible one. He is your praise, and he it is who has done for you these great and terrible things. Your fathers went down into Egypt with seventy souls; and now you have become a people mighty and populous.

Moshe Recites the Blessings Toward Gerizim

For if you will only keep all the commands that I command this day to do, to love your God, to walk in all his ways, and in all his statutes, then God will drive out all the men of the place, and every place upon which the soles of your feet will tread. There will no man be able to stand before you; for the fear of you and the dread of you will be upon all the land that you will tread upon.

Look, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if you obey my commands and my statutes, a curse, if you will not obey but turn aside out of the way that I command you this day. And it will come to pass, when God has brought you into the land where you go to possess it, that you will put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim and the curse upon Mount Eyval. Are they not on the other side of the Yarden, by the way where the sun goes down, in the land of the Kena'anim, over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh? And these will stand upon Mount Eyval; Reuben, Zebulun and Gad, Asher, Dan and Naphtali. And these will stand upon Mount Gerizim; Simeon, and Judah, and Issachar, Manasseh and Ephraim and Benjamin.

And the Levites will stand before Mount Gerizim and will speak, and say with a loud voice: Blessed be the man who loves the Lord God and bows down to him only and serves him only. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who consecrates the seventh day and rests thereon. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who honors his father and his mother. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who avenges not nor bears any grudge against the soul of his brother. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who defiles not the wife of his neighbor. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who oppresses not his neighbor. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who swears not by my name falsely. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who deals not falsely nor lies against his neighbor. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who sets not his eye upon his neighbor's goods. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who loves his neighbor. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Blessed be the man who confirms all the words of this Law to do them. And all the people will answer and say, Amen.

And you will answer further and say with a loud voice. Look, if you will hearken diligently to the voice of your God, to observe and to do all his commands, then all these blessings will come upon you. Blessed will you be in the city, and blessed will you be in the field. Blessed will be your basket and your store. Blessed will be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your kine and the flocks of your sheep. Blessed will you be when you come in, and blessed will you be when you go out.

Your God will cause your enemies to be smitten before your face. God will command the blessing upon all the works of your hand. God will establish you a people set-apart to himself. And all the people of the earth will see and will be afraid of you. God will open to you your sky to give the rain to your land in his season; and you will lend to many nations, and you will not borrow. And you will be above, and you will not be beneath . . .

Moshe Recites the Curses Toward Eyval

And the Levites will turn their faces towards Mount Eyval, and will answer and say with a loud voice: Cursed be the man who makes any graven or molten image, the work of the hands of the

craftsman. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be the man who does any work on the seventh day to profane it. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he who sets light by his father or his mother. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he who smites his neighbor secretly. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be the man who approaches to any who is near of kin to him or who commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, or who lies with any manner of beast. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he who removes his neighbor's landmark. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be the man who swears by my name falsely. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he who takes reward to testify falsely against his neighbor. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be the man who lifts up his eye to his neighbor's wife or to his daughter or to his maidservant or to anything that is his. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be the man who hates his brother in his heart. And all the people will answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he who confirms not all the words of this Law to do them. And all the people will answer and say, Amen.

And the Levites also will call with a loud voice and say, And it will come to pass, if you will not hearken to the voice of your God, to observe to do all his commands and his statutes; that all these curses will come upon you. Cursed will you be in the city, and cursed will you be in the field. Cursed will be your basket and your store. Cursed will be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your land, the increase of your kine, and the flocks of your sheep. Cursed will you be when you come in, and cursed will you be when you go out. God will cause you to be smitten before your enemies. God will send cursing upon all the works of your hand. God will make you a scandal, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations of the earth. God will restrain the skies. The stranger who is within you will get up very high above you; and you will come down very low. He will lend to you, and you will not lend to him. God will make you perish, and will consume you from off the face of the land, wherever you may go-forth to possess.

Moshe's Final Words and Postscript

I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out come in before you. And God said to me. You will not go over this Yarden. Joshua, who stands before you, he will go over Yarden, and he will come with you to the good land where you go to possess. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid: for the Lord God he is the one who goes before you.

These are the words that Moshe commanded all the children of Israel, according to the mouth of the LORD, in the plains of Moab before his death.

God's Ten Words

I: I am the Lord God, who liberated you from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. You will have no other God. You will not make for you any hewn image, or any likeness of anything that is in the sky above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: you will not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: I am the Lord God.

II: . . . In six days I made sky and earth, and all that in them is, and I rested the seventh day: so you also will rest, you, and your cattle and all that you have. I am the Lord God.

III: Honor your father and your mother. I am the Lord God.

IV: You will not kill the soul of your brother. I am the Lord God.

V: You will not commit adultery with the wife of your neighbor. I am the Lord God.

VI: You will not steal the property of your brother. I am the Lord God.

VII: You will not swear by my name falsely for I will visit with zealous anger the iniquity of the father upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who take my name falsely. I am the Lord God.

VIII: You will not bear false witness against your brother. I am the Lord God.

IX: You will not desire the wife of . . . your brother, his man-servant, or his maidservant, or anything that is his. I am the Lord God.

X: You will not hate your brother in your heart. I am the Lord God.

These Ten Words God thus spoke.